

December 4, 2014 STATEMENT – Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Opposes H.R. 5759, the “Executive Amnesty Prevention Act”

Washington, D.C. – Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), the national organization established by Lutheran Churches in America to serve uprooted people, opposes the “Executive Amnesty Prevention Act” (H.R. 5759). This legislation, intended to prevent the President from implementing executive actions on immigration matters, would have devastating unintended consequences on millions of families, as well as other vulnerable individuals fleeing violence and persecution.

Grounded in our faith, LIRS has long advocated for an immigration system that encourages and supports keeping families together, and better protects children, migrants, refugees and other vulnerable persons. By preventing any Administration from acting to even temporarily protect from deportation categories of persons who are present in the United States without documentation, this bill contradicts LIRS’s core principles of respect for human dignity and the biblical call to welcome the newcomer.

LIRS and Lutherans across America welcome President Obama’s steps to invite our family members, neighbors and coworkers out of the shadows; replacing fear and instability with hope and security. The Immigration Accountability Executive Actions strengthen our communities and congregations by keeping families together. Policies to welcome newcomers are grounded in our history as a nation that has been renewed and strengthened by each generation of migrants and refugees.

While the President’s action addressed several important needs, it is only temporary and is not a substitute for long overdue legislation to fix the immigration system. Rather than trying to obstruct the President’s actions, Congress should work to enact compassionate and just immigration reforms. LIRS will continue to work with Congress and the Administration to ensure that our immigration system maintains our proud legacy as a nation of welcome and refuge.

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Founded in 1939, LIRS is the second largest refugee resettlement agency in the United States. It is nationally recognized for its leadership advocating with refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for providing services to migrants through over 60 grassroots legal and social service partners across the United States. Celebrating 75 years of service and advocacy this year, LIRS has helped more than 500,000 migrants and refugees rebuild their lives in America.

Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / LINK

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Civil and Human Rights Coalition Urges House to Reject Yoho Immigration Bill

WASHINGTON –*Wade Henderson, president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, issued the following statement in response to the proposed “Executive Amnesty Prevention Act” (H.R. 5759):*

“Nearly a year and a half after the Senate passed a sweeping, bipartisan immigration reform compromise, we are profoundly disappointed that the most the House can do is vote to keep the current dysfunctional system in place. The bill the House is taking up today, the ‘Executive Amnesty Prevention Act,’ is nothing more than a symbolic attack on the common-sense policies recently announced by President Obama to restore balance to our immigration enforcement policies.

In looking at the provisions of the bill, it is difficult to know where to begin. The findings in the bill contain numerous errors of fact and law. The operational parts of the bill appear to have been hastily drafted, and they certainly have not been subjected to any meaningful hearings or bipartisan negotiations. Because the language is so sweeping and so poorly thought-out, it is unclear whether it would go beyond the president’s recent policies to eliminate other long-established forms of relief, such as Temporary Protected Status. In the rush by House leadership to pass this measure, we do not expect today’s debate to shed any light on the impact of the bill or to seriously consider any alternative approaches.

For years, President Obama has expressed a sincere desire to work with Congress on a more comprehensive approach to immigration. Rep. Yoho’s bill is yet another example of House Republicans playing politics instead of working to find a solution to a national problem. House members of good conscience should vote against it.

When Congress returns next year, we sincerely hope the House leadership will finally take the president up on his offer and work on lasting solutions to the many problems that plague our current immigration system.”

Wade Henderson is president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States. The Leadership Conference works toward an America as good as its ideals. For more information on The Leadership Conference, visit www.civilrights.org.

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NEWS FROM UFW

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UFW opposes H.R. 5759 Congressman Ted Yoho's (R-FL) proposal to prevent the President from protecting immigrant families

As House Republicans Gear Up to Vote on a new Deportation Bill, The United Farm Workers Calls on Congress to Respond "NO."

Rather than to support bipartisan immigration legislation sitting on their desk for more than a year, they continue staging political theatrics at the expense of immigrants.

BAKERSFIELD, CA– The United Farm Workers, strongly opposes and calls on Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) and all members of Congress to vote "NO" on H.R. 5759. After Congress failed to pass meaningful immigration legislation, they are now focusing their efforts on trying to sabotage the President's actions, which would protect hard-working immigrant families. With this vote, Republicans have proclaimed once again that they do not value immigrant contributions that move this country forward. While the vote is largely symbolic, as it would not pass in the U.S. Senate, the gesture speaks to the Republicans' anger at the President for taking steps within his authority to fix the immigration system on his own and their direct unwillingness to help millions of undocumented immigrants.

H.R. 5759, the bill introduced by Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL), is a direct attack against farm workers and immigrants everywhere, who bring food to America's dinner tables every day. It's also an attack toward, the millions of young people whose lives have been improved by the President's 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and those, who will benefit from this new program.

The UFW has worked for 14 years on a bipartisan basis to get Congress to act on immigration policy. Different versions of agricultural compromises, negotiated by the UFW with the nation's agricultural employers, passed the U.S. Senate multiple times over the last 14 years, including during the current session and has held the majority of the support in the House of Representatives. However, Congress has failed to act. As enforcement at the border has dramatically increased over the last decade, agricultural

employers have become increasingly vocal about their inability to hire professional, competent farm workers. Yet Congress has failed to act.

The nation will benefit from a safer, more stable food supply as a result of President Obama's immigration actions. The President's action also shows respect to some of the new Americans, who are currently working in the fields to feed the country. Consider the words of Maria, a California farm worker for almost two decades, who shared the following letter about her and her family and what she would gain from executive action when she works harvesting grapes for other Americans to enjoy:

"My name is Maria and I've been in the U.S. for 17 years. I work in the fields harvesting table grapes. I'm from Earlimart, CA. It's really sad for me that I haven't been able to see my father in 17 years and my five siblings, whom have stayed in Mexico. It's very necessary that an executive order on immigration be passed because failing to pass administrative relief is negatively affecting many families.

For example, I'm a single mother with three daughters and every day I wake up to keep fighting and working in the fields to keep my family moving forward. Yet, there's always the fear that immigration (officials) will deport me."

President Obama's deferred action program for new Americans, who are parents of U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents and who have lived in the United States for more than 5 years will help Maria and those like her come out of the shadows.

Maria has worked hard to feed the nation for years, it's time for GOP leaders to do their jobs and vote on real solutions that will fix the broken immigration system. The UFW urges all members of Congress to Vote "No" on Rep. Yoho's new Deportation Bill, H.R. 5759.

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